



# CHESTERFIELD WFA

## Newsletter and Magazine issue 39

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## Welcome to Issue 39 - the March 2019 Newsletter and Magazine of Chesterfield WFA.

The next meeting of the Branch will be on  
March 5th at 7.30pm.



**Our guest speaker, Stephen Barker is a first time visitor to the Branch. He will talk on:-**

*"Armistice 1918 and After: Some Local Perspectives" This fully illustrated talk looks at the impact of the First World War Armistice and the legacy of the war in local communities.*

The Branch meets at the Labour Club, Unity House, Saltergate, Chesterfield S40 1NF on the first Tuesday of each month. There is plenty of parking available on site and in the adjacent road. Access to the car park is in Tennyson Road, however, which is one way and cannot be accessed directly from Saltergate.

***Grant Cullen – Branch Secretary***



## Western Front Association Chesterfield Branch – Meetings 2019

Meetings start at 7.30pm and take place at the Labour Club, Unity House, Saltergate, Chesterfield S40 1NF

January	8th	<b>Jan.8<sup>th</sup></b> Branch AGM followed by a talk by <b>Tony Bolton</b> (Branch Chairman) on the key events of the first year after the Armistice.
February	5th	Making a welcome return to Chesterfield after a gap of several years is <b>Dr Simon People</b> who will discuss the <b>`Versailles Conference of 1919`</b>
March	5th	<b>A first time visitor and speaker at Chesterfield Branch will be Stephen Barker whose topic will be the `Armistice 1918 and After`</b>
April	2nd	No stranger to the Branch <b>Peter Hart</b> will be making his annual pilgrimage to Chesterfield. His presentation will be <b>“Aces Falling: War Over the Trenches 1918”</b>
May	7th	<b>John Beckett</b> Professor of English Regional History, Faculty of Arts at the University of Nottingham - <b>`The Chilwell Explosion Revisited`</b>
June	4th	<b>Rob Thompson</b> - always a popular visitor to Chesterfield Branch. We all tend to think of recycling as a `modern` phenomenon but in <b>Wombles of the Western Front- Salvage on the Western Front`</b> Rob examines the work of salvage from its small beginnings at Battalion level to the creation of the giant corporation controlled by GHQ.
July	2nd	In <b>Dr John Bourne</b> we have one of the top historians of The Great War and he is going to talk about <b>`JRR Tolkein and the 11<sup>th</sup> Lancashire Fusiliers on the Somme`</b>
August	6th	<b>Carol Henderson</b> is an emerging historian making her first visit to Chesterfield, she will talk about the <b>`Manpower Crisis 1917-1918`</b>
September	3rd	Back with us for a second successive year is <b>Dr Graham Kemp</b> who will discuss <b>`The Impact of the economic blockade of Germany AFTER the armistice and how it led to WW2`</b>
October	1st	Another debutant at the Chesterfield Branch but he comes highly recommended is <b>Rod Arnold</b> who will give a naval presentation on the <b>`Battle of Dogger Bank - Clash of the Battlecruisers`</b>
November	5th	Chairman of the Lincoln Branch of the WFA, <b>Jonathan D`Hooghe</b> , will present on the <b>“7<sup>th</sup> Sherwood Foresters - The Robin Hood Rifles”</b>
December	3rd	Our final meeting of 2019 will be in the hands of our own <b>Tim Lynch</b> with his presentation on <b>“One Hundred Years of Battlefield Tourism”</b>

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**Notes from the Chair (32)**

On the 19th of last month following the Book Group meeting , the Branch Committee members present held a short meeting to consider speakers for the 2020 programme and I was very pleased with the progress we have made. In addition to the regular monthly meetings it was proposed to lay on a day trip to Cannock Chase in Staffordshire to look around the site of the First World War training camps under the direction of a local WFA member and student on the Wolverhampton University MA course. A number of local battalions trained at Cannock including the Sheffield City Battalion, there is also a German military cemetery there. If we get sufficient interest it is hoped to run the trip on a Saturday or Sunday in April 2020 as we did for the Lincoln trip. It would be helpful if anyone who may be interested could let one of the Committee know so that arrangements can be finalised and mini buses or maybe 32 seater coaches can be booked. I will be asking for an indication of interest at Tuesday`s meeting.

Last Tuesday I represented the Branch at the World War One Working Group at Chesterfield Town Hall. It has been decided that the event to commemorate the centenary of the signing of the Peace Treaty will be held on 28 June and will be a short `drum head` multi faith service outside the Town Hall followed by a picnic for school children in Queen`s Park. I would be like to know if anyone would be interested in doing a WFA display stand in the park which would have to be child appropriate. If we can`t arrange a display there is an opportunity to volunteer as a steward to get several hundred 10 and 11 year olds from the Town Hall to Queen`s Park. Chesterfield B.C. hope to be able to provide a picnic for the children. Friday 28 June is the day before this year`s Armed Forces Day and several of the stalls will have been used the previous week at Staveley Feast which would provide a wider audience.

I can also report that on Tuesday 12th I gave a talk to Chesterfield Rotary Club at the Derbyshire Hotel which seemed to go down well- at least they gave me a dinner!

*Tony Bolton* Branch Chair

*Any opinions expressed in this Newsletter /Magazine are not necessarily those of the Western Front Association, Chesterfield Branch, in particular, or the Western Front Association in general*

## Secretary's Scribbles



Welcome to issue 39 of the WFA Chesterfield Branch Newsletter and Magazine.

I would take this opportunity to welcome our speaker for the March meeting - Stephen Barker - who is visiting the Branch for the first time. Stephen is an independent Heritage Advisor who works with a number of museums, universities, charities and other heritage organisations to design exhibitions and make funding applications on their behalf. He is currently working with the History Faculty, University of Oxford and the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum. Stephen specialises in military history,

particularly the First World War and British Civil Wars. He is a Trustee of the Bucks Military Museum Trust, a Museum Mentor and has worked at The Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, Banbury Museum and for Oxfordshire Museum Services. He is the author of 'Lancashire's Forgotten Heroes' - a history of the 8th East Lancs in the Great War.'

As mentioned elsewhere the Book Discussion Group had a good session on 19th February which I unfortunately missed due to my wife`s illness, but Peter Harris has kindly contributed the report.

This issue sees the conclusion of the `Munitions Crisis` series of articles. I am always looking for similar contributions from all our members and friends.

As most of you will be aware, we had an excellent outing to Lincoln last September and such was the success of this Branch day out, we are planning another - this time to the Great War training and cemetery sites on Cannock Chase. This will be sometime in April. As with the Lincoln trip, the Branch will cover the cost of the transport to and from Cannock. All on our correspondence list will be notified of the date when it`s all finalised .

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible on Tuesday night - all welcome

Grant Cullen - Branch Secretary

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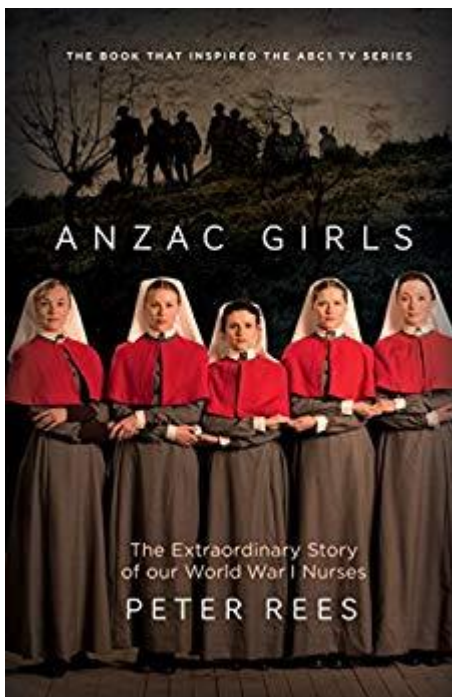
### CHESTERFIELD WFA BOOK GROUP

Nine of us met on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> and the book we had been reading was 'The Battle that won the war, Bellenglise, Breaching the Hindenburg Line' by Peter Rostron. The book was well received by all of us. We agreed that the title was a bit misleading as there were still the battles of the Selle and the Sambre to come after Bellenglise before the Armistice. We all found the book readable. The author had an old fashioned way of introducing each chapter and the maps and extracts from the war diaries showing trenches, deployment of artillery and intelligence had been badly copied and without any attempt to clean up the images were very dark. But overall a very good read.

We discussed which book we would read for our next meeting on Tuesday April 16th and decided on Peter Rees, 'Anzac Girls, An Extraordinary Story of World War 1 Nurses.' (London, Allen & Unwin: 2008).

By the end of the Great War, forty-five Australian and New Zealand nurses had died on overseas service and over two hundred had been decorated. These were the women who left for war looking for adventure and romance but were soon confronted with challenges for which their civilian lives could never have prepared them. Their strength and dignity were remarkable.

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Using diaries and letters, Peter Rees takes us into the hospital camps and the wards, and the tent surgeries on the edge of some of the most horrific battlefronts of human history. But he also allows the friendships and loves of these courageous and compassionate women to shine through and enrich our experience.

Profoundly moving, *Anzac Girls* is a story of extraordinary courage and humanity shown by a group of women whose contribution to the Anzac legend has barely been recognised in our history. Peter Rees has changed that understanding forever.

It is a fairly long book at 315 pages but from the way it is laid out it is the sort of book you might just read a few chapters if you hadn't the time to read it all. It has also been made into a

TV series which is very true to the book and is well worth watching on DVD.

## February 2019 Meeting.

Branch Chair, Tony Bolton opened the meeting in front of a very healthy attendance by asking Committee Member Jon-Paul Harding to recite Binyon's immortal poem.



There being little routine Branch business Tony then welcomed our speaker for the evening, Dr. Simon People for what would be his second visit to Chesterfield Branch, this time discussing the ***Versailles Settlement of 1919 and its Consequences*** Simon said that since he had retired from teaching two years ago he didn't often get the opportunity nowadays to 'lecture' far less present to such a knowledgeable audience as he was facing this evening.

He was looking at the Treaty of Versailles in its broadest sense, incorporating the Treaties of Trianon, Sevres, with Turkey, in other words the whole picture. He said that in the first part of his talk he would look at Versailles and the possible consequences of it, and then in the second part...but....as all good students of history know, there is not going to be a single explanation, hence he would be saying ...you might want to think about these other factors that came up.

Simon's first slide placed Versailles in its context..

- The Armistice on November 11<sup>th</sup> 1918
- The Kiel Mutiny
- Munich
- Austria-Hungary sued for peace



The Armistice signed on November 11<sup>th</sup> was an agreement to stop fighting - it was not a peace treaty, so the consequences of that and what happened later on partly reflect the fact that it was that moment when the Germans agreed to stop fighting unlike 1945 when they agreed to sign an unconditional surrender and their country was largely occupied - the armistice is an

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agreement to cease fighting. The background to that included the Kiel Mutiny. The German High Seas Fleet had largely been in harbour since 1916. The officers had `combed out` the keen guys to join the submarine arm and the ones who dodged that were still sitting on the battleships and battlecruisers. These sailors were told on November 4<sup>th</sup> by their officers that they were going to put to sea for one great, last, heroic charge against the Royal Navy. Simon said to imagine a typical sailor, married, children and word gets round that you are all going to go off and make your heroic sacrifice. Of course you know by this time that negotiations to end the war are going on and you weigh up the possibility of a `Death Ride` against the Royal Navy versus going home to your family at the end of the war. Most of the men took the view that the officers and their `honour` could go park themselves in a corner of a locked room. So the stokers etc. went on strike, the government sent up a Minister but still the sailors said `nein` meaning that there would be no final `sally forth` of the High Seas Fleet.

Munich was seething on the brink of revolution, so the German High Command was desperate to avoid what had happened in 1917 in Russia and of course Austria-Hungary had already sued for peace having previously and unsuccessfully tried to use the Pope (1917) and an Italian Prince (1918) to extricate themselves from the conflict. In the winter of 1917-1918 people in Vienna were taking clothing off the dead and burying them naked, such was the shortages of clothing being experienced in that city. If it was bad there what was it like in rural communities?

So that was the context in which the Versailles Treaty was eventually negotiated. There was to be a reduction in the German army to 100,000 men, bearing in mind it was 2 million when mobilised in 1914, confirming the belief that it was the German army and its militarism was the cause of the war. But, if you read in Germany, you won't appreciate an army as small as that considering the French Army consisted of about 1.2 million men when WW1 began. So the French, in any future conflict situation could mobilise about 1 million men with Germany only 100,000 to oppose them. This was not popular in Germany when it had been an `army with a state` rather than a `state with an army`. The way that Prussian society had permeated Germany had enormous influence. So to put in context the future German army would be about the size of the BEF when it mobilised in 1914.

The German army would consist of seven infantry divisions - compared with over 100 serving on the Western Front in 1918 - plus three cavalry divisions. What is actually very interesting is that the German aristocracy actually became more influential. Whilst the German army was to be seriously reduced in size what happened to their weapons - rifles, machine guns, grenades, ammunition? Was it all handed in? No - partly because they were so worried about the rise of the Left in Germany - they went around burying large caches of weapons - some in Austria where it was felt there was less chance of them being discovered. Ludendorff, who had originally fled to Sweden (dressed as a woman) later returned to southern Germany and oversaw the transfer of much of the weaponry of the returned Bavarian regiments across the border into the new Austrian republic. There was widespread evasion, under the Treaty they were supposed to have much fewer men but they started forming clubs and associations, like for example experienced NCO`s were passed off as PE instructors so as to keep them in groups. The landowners helped to facilitate this by creating a fund to support the Freikorps. Now the Freikorps was originally the name given to Germans who had risen up to oppose the French in 1812 when Prussia abandoned the French and gave their allegiance to the Allies. The

`Freikorps` or literally `Free Bodies` had no connection with those of 100 hundred years previous but it was a name that resonated...a bit like calling yourself the `Sherwood Foresters`...but what they were was an anti-Left militia mobilised by the Right. The big landowners put money in, fed them and supplied farm building accommodation, and, for the

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future, they included people like Martin Bormann who of course became a major player in the Third Reich.

The `new` Germany was not allowed any military aircraft, no tanks but in 1922 Germany and Russia, by now called the Soviet Union, the pariah of Europe, signed a deal and German tank crews went to Russia to train Russians how to use tanks and of course the Germans got all the facilities to practise and train themselves obviously including their own men who had no previous experience in tanks. To a lesser extent the same arrangement was evolved for use of aircraft. So, as early as 1922, the Germans are publicly getting around the whole Treaty.

With respect to the navy, Simon said there was no need to reiterate who was winning the big naval race before the war - the Royal Navy - so as the French were desperate to limit the German army, the British were desperate to limit a future German navy. Germany was to be allowed to have six `pocket` battleships of under 30000 tons each and if you remember that prior to 1914 Germany was building up to six battleships per year, an equivalent of one year`s production pre-war. They were allowed six light cruisers, thus protecting the British empire`s trade routes as these were for coastal defence only, 12 destroyers, 12 torpedo boats...and no submarines..the one thing the British did not want the Germans to have. Again, after 1922, the Germans and the Russians agreed on reciprocal training packages. The Russians let the Germans practise in their boats with the experienced German sailors training the Russians in how to use them effectively.

Moving on, Simon saw he would have a thought about Central Europe, showing the undernoted map.



From the map you could see the creation of Poland which had previously been divided up between Russia, Prussia and Austria -Hungary in 1793 and the `peacemakers` of Versailles

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recreated a Polish state. Where the war had started, Sarajevo, became part of the new state of Yugoslavia, taking in Serbia, Croatia - an interesting `marriage` given the historical enmity between the Serbs and the Croats which as we all know flared up bloodily in the 1990s. The World War Two the Serbs would hunt the Croats and vice versa. Simon pointed out Austria, reminding his listeners that Austria had ruled all of this Central European area for centuries and now, post war, all that was left was a tiny little country. In 1925 the Austrian economy collapsed....guess who put it back together again.....the Bank of England! Simon said that folks should recall that before the Euro there was a currency called the Austrian Schilling, the reason it was called the `schilling` was because the Bank of England was sorting out the new currency and didn't want to call it the `mark`. The Austrian economy was in a terrible state and they made the mistake of selling everything they had and inflation had devalued the money left to buy in fresh supplies.

Russia, of course, had lost the war, badly, and the Treaty ignored them, despite the fact that they were still one of the most powerful countries emerging from the post war wreckage. The creation, out of Russian territory of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, of course created problems for the future with Stalin grabbing them back for the Soviet Union between 1939 and 1941 where they remained until the 1990s when the three countries regained their independence. Today of course sensitivities have resurfaced with Mr Putin casting an eye on them again.

The creation of Poland left a problem - access to the sea for the new state - which was landlocked. The solution was to create the `Polish Corridor`. The principle of the Treaty of Versailles was to let people be in the country of their nationality and language except, of course if they are German and you put them into Poland so as to give Poland access to the sea. So if you are German this provides a very easy propaganda victory as you can say that Versailles was all about fairness except if you were German.

Simon then pointed out Ukraine on his map and reminded folks about the situation currently affecting that region, there being bits which are ethnically Russian.

Then Simon discussed Czechoslovakia which he felt would have a few resonances - Chamberlain, Munich etc. - and it was one of the areas where they did a bit of fiddling around the edges. The Czechs are seen as good guys having had units on the Western Front and had fought against the Bolsheviks in the Russian civil war, so the `peacemakers` wanted to give them a state, but to do so was going to be awkward as a big part of the proposed state was actually ethnically German - the Sudetenland - an area which will be contentious in 1938. Simon pointed out on the map other areas of ethnic Germans - all within the new state of Czechoslovakia. Why include the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia? That was where the Harz Mountains were - a defensible border. So, when you get to the 1930s there is a whole group of ethnic Germans wanting to break away from Czechoslovakia having been stuck inside a new country as a result of a scheme which was supposed to support their ethnicity and language but which, in their case, manifestly did not.

Looking to the opposite side of this map there was areas coloured green. Hungary had been part of Austria -Hungary but was seen as `nasty` as it had been part of the Dual Monarchy but it had also been seen as the `hard-nosed` bit of the Dual Monarchy. In 1867 when the Austrians lost to the Germans, the Hungarians claimed full governing rights and they got the right to govern



other nationalities at the southern end of the Empire. As rulers they were not very nice so if you were a Serb, a Ruthenian, or other similar peoples you found yourself having to learn Hungarian at school - the first language of instruction would be Hungarian. The Hungarians had been looked down and put down by the German speakers in Austria so as soon as they got the chance they

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dominated those other peoples who were subject to them. Of course, with the Hungarians being on the losing side, by virtue of the Treaty many Hungarian groups were included in Czechoslovakia.

If you look at the German invasion of Czechoslovakia in March 1939 - not the post Munich bit - you can see that the Germans regained the Sudetenland at Munich but subsequently acquired other areas, whilst from the east it was also a Hungarian army seizing Czech territory as they want their own ethnic areas back. So when Hitler marched into Czechoslovakia in March 1939 - he had the advantage of the Hungarians on the other border saying `yes please` - we'll join you. So for the Czechs it was not good, and Simon recalled the `Velvet Revolution` of 1990 and the `Velvet Divorce` a few years later when Slovakia broke away. The Czech lands were Protestant lands and they rebelled against the Holy Roman Empire and were defeated by the Catholics in 1620 but retained its Hussite heritage although if you enter any church in Prague you will note how totally Baroque they are, with large statues anathema to the general Protestant population. It was like telling the local population WE WON - YOU LOST. Indeed one of the reasons for the split in the 190s was that Czechoslovakia was being run more for the benefit of the Czechs, not the Slovaks.

Moving on, Simon put up a map of Hungary - that in white was the Hungary in 1914 - that in red the post war Hungary. So to see why the Hungarians were not happy with the Treaty of Versailles, you only have to look at that map - look at all the peoples they ruled in 1914 but by 1919 these folks were all independent. The Hungarians were so fed up with the way Versailles treated them they joined Hitler, only to lose again, this time to the Soviets. Roumania gained Transylvania following the Treaty, but the majority of the population were ethnic Hungarians.

Continuing, Simon said we had looked at the Hungarians, we had looked at the Czechs...now to look at another little nation - Ireland

He put up two maps, the first the UK General Election results of December 1918 from Ireland. Green is Sinn Fein, yellow the Irish Parliamentary Party which by then supported partition, and setting aside Belfast where you effectively had the Labour Party winning seats, the remainder was held by the Unionist parties. However, Simon pointed out the border as drawn, they based it upon what people wanted - Derry/Londonderry should have been in the South but for historical reasons was included in the North. Southern Ireland had turned up at the Versailles Conference and asked to participate as a small independent nation...but were told (politely) to get lost! Basically Northern Ireland was based upon the six counties, not exactly how people had voted.

Italy...why did we fight....Simon put that in as that was a question the Italians had been asking themselves. Italy, of course had joined the Allies following the Treaty of London in 1915 - yes this talk is about the Treaty of Versailles - but it was a Treaty that Britain got Italy to sign to get them to join the war. Italy was promised a bit of the Tyrol, a bit of area around Trieste and then part of what was Dalmatia. But as we know following the Treaty of Versailles the latter two bits went to Yugoslavia. The Italians response was...hang on a bit...we lost a million men and didn't get what we were promised...promises that had been written down in the Treaty of London. If you join us...we will give you this but it turned out to be...thank you for your efforts but we have not given you this.....!. Of course the Allies, Britain, France - even America thought

that as participants the Italians were rubbish as a military force - they had only fought the Austrians. Not unexpectedly the Italians were very annoyed because they had lost out and Count D'Annunzio occupied Fiume, right on the border saying that was promised to us, we should have it. The Italian government huffed and puffed and said you will have to leave which he eventually did, but it was actions like this which helped to bring Mussolini to power, because

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that belief that Italy had been cheated, that it had not been dealt with fairly. The Allied response was you only beat the Austrians at the end with the help of British and French divisions so from the allied point of view the Italians didn't deserve any more. Also there was this grandiose plan to create Yugoslavia so dropping a bit off to please the Italians, didn't really fit in. So, a consequence of the Versailles Treaty was that Italy felt cheated.

The net map displayed summarised everything about Germany, Simon pointing out the `Polish Corridor` that he had mentioned previously. This divided Germany from East Prussia, now East Prussia had been key to the Prussians becoming kings because that bit had fallen outside of the Holy Roman Empire - you could not be an independent king within the Holy Roman Empire and they became Kings of East Prussia first. In the south a big chunk of Silesia went to Poland. Now Silesia contained a lot of German businesses but they employed thousands of Polish workers so in a vote the factory owners voted to be German but their workers, in overwhelming numbers voted to join with Poland. But at least that decision was taken based upon the plebiscite result. Similar for Schleswig-Holstein, southern end votes to be German, northern end votes to be Danish. That wasn't too controversial as Schleswig-Holstein had been grabbed by Germany in a war and that plebiscite result could have been predicted.

Another bit that was not terribly controversial was Alsace and Lorraine which had only become part of Germany because of the victory of 1871, so it is hardly surprising that it goes back to the French in 1919.

Malmedy was given to Belgium to compensate in part for Germany's wrecking of the Belgian coalfields.

The Rhineland was controversial and it was here that several British divisions were sent as the British Army of the Rhine in 1919. The idea was they would be the buffer. The French wanted the Rhineland to become a totally independent country but Lloyd George and President Wilson did not think that politically it was possible although in fact it had been given to Prussia in 1815 as they wanted, at the end of the Napoleonic wars, someone to keep an eye on the French. And of course it was the Prussians who had helped the British out at the Battle of Waterloo. Ultimately it became part of a united Germany under Bismarck.

So this was what happened to Germany in 1919 and in almost every case it means Germans being excluded from Germany.

Moving on Simon then posed the question `Versailles - did it lead to World War Two?`

Well, there is a simple way of looking at it, damage to Germany leading to the rise of Hitler and the Nazis, leading to rearmament, the Anglo-German naval Treaty of 1935 which was revision of that full section of the Treaty of Versailles - much to the disapproval of the French. Then there was the Hoare-Laval Pact. Italy was threatening to invade Abyssinia (present day Ethiopia) the only independent state in Africa. The Italians subsequently invaded in 1936 - and lost at Adowa, but this made Mussolini more determined than ever to prove that fascist Italy was stronger and at a subsequent conference Sir Samuel Hoare and his French counterpart Pierre Laval agreed to let Italy have Ethiopia - otherwise Mussolini will get too friendly with Hitler! Britain, France and Italy had stopped Hitler absorbing Austria in 1935 and Mussolini decide that he was owed - on a

quid pro quo basis - Ethiopia. Unfortunately, the public got to hear of the Hoare-Laval Pact and found that it was morally repugnant to hand over Ethiopia to the Italians. Hoare was forced to resign and the Pact collapsed. Mussolini invaded Ethiopia, Britain and France agreed to sanctions - not including oil though - something which might actually have stopped the Italian tanks and planes.

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Then in 1938 Hitler got his way with the `Anschluss` with Austria. There was going to be a vote in Austria - the question being `Do you want a free, democratic, Christian Austria` which appealed to everybody - Socialists could agree with the democratic bit, Catholics could agree with the Christian bit, etc., - so there was few in Austria who could disagree with the question. Hitler knew that so he moved into Austria on the Saturday - the day before that vote was to take place on the Sunday.

Then there was the Munich agreement where the British and the French sell out the Czechs, their army mobilising and then being abandoned.

So, from this you could say that the Versailles Treaty leads to World War Two, that way. But, Simon said, let`s give some thought to the alternatives - keeping 1929 in your minds - what could have more to do with WW2 - The Great Depression. Remember Hungary? - huge investment, then suddenly in 1929 - no markets - mass unemployment. Whilst Simon put up 1929 as the Great Depression, it actually started two years previously in 1927 when agricultural prices start to fall but it was in the US in 1929 when it really hit as farmers, having made no money in 1928, had no purchasing power in the next year. When the consumers had no money that was it. 1929 and the Great Depression is a key factor. Simon said that in his opinion, you cannot really understand why World War Two came about without an understanding of the Great Depression. Simon put up a picture of the Jarrow crusade, just to point out it was not just Germany which was affected, France had similar protests. The Jarrow marchers were looking for work - what put these guys back into work - rearmament. When they finally decided they needed more warships for the Royal Navy, much of this was in the North East - Tyneside, Wearside and Teesside. The Midlands went back to work sooner building aircraft from the 1936 White Paper, but all this shows that rearmament was key and we cannot forget that it perhaps did not cause the war but it certainly was a contributory factor.

Between 1929 and 1932 the Nazi Party rises from obscurity to become the largest party - but not the majority party. In the 1928 elections the Nazis polled 1.8% of the vote, by 1932-33 they have 32%. So the Great Depression had a significant effect on the appeal of the Nazi Party in Germany. By 1932 there were 6 million registered unemployed in Germany....but...after two years of being out of work, you came off the unemployment register, so it was likely that there could have been around 8 million unemployed at that time. This was a huge number of people with nothing, fertile ground for a political group coming along and saying `this needs to happen` or `that needs to happen` to solve our problems. Don`t forget too, that Berlin and its surrounds was a socialist heartland, Goebbels was given the job of turning it over to the Nazis - he completely failed. Worth bearing in mind that there were lots of people in Germany at that time who were not Nazis.

The Rhineland, Catholic Rhineland remained a central party stronghold, even in 1932 when the Nazi Party vote peaked, the Centre Party still dominated the Rhineland. In fact, referring back to the economic depression, the most fertile regions for the Nazis was rural Germany.

In the Depression farmers couldn`t sell their goods, the price of cotton plummeted indeed in the memoirs of US President Johnson, he recalls that on his family`s cotton farm the total income for one year during the depression was *one dollar* !

It is not just the economy, but it is a big part of it, where you can link it with Versailles is where you can link it with the elite. The Nazis ended up getting into power by doing a deal with Hindenburg who was afraid of them. Ludendorff actually told him not to do so but Hindenburg went ahead - to stop the Left gaining control. To many people - including Von Papen, a member of the German `elite` - but someone who had no popular appeal - the answer was to link the Nazis

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with this elite group. You now had tens of thousands of men with bands on their arms going around stimulating the crowds to the elite men running the country to make it work. It didn't work out that way, but that was the thinking at the time. That was why the ruling elite in Germany formed a coalition with the Nazis - then you get the Reichstag fire.



The Reichstag fire was an arson attack on the Reichstag building (home of the German parliament) in Berlin on Monday 27 February 1933, precisely four weeks after Adolf Hitler was sworn in as Chancellor of Germany. Hitler's government stated that Marinus van der Lubbe (left), a Dutch communist, was found near the building and attributed the fire to communist agitators in general—though later that year, a German court decided that van der Lubbe had acted alone, as he claimed. After the fire, a series of emergency laws, including the Reichstag Fire Decree was passed. The Nazi Party used the fire as a pretext that communists were plotting against the German government, and the event is considered pivotal in the establishment of Nazi Germany. Under these new laws the Nazis were allowed to appoint themselves as police officers - the local Nazi Party could appoint one of their own as police chief. So, at no point did the Nazis take power by the winning of free elections whereby the electorate voted them in, but

nevertheless, they get themselves into power - a clear link in the chain to the Great Depression. What was the Nazi's message at that time - most of it was about reversing Versailles.

When Hitler is first appointed as Chancellor on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1933, he immediately arranges a meeting with the German generals - remember most of these men were from aristocratic - elite - backgrounds. What did he say to them?...we are going to re-arm. Now, if you had been one of those senior officers who had been in an army of 2 million in 1914 - the best army in world, the best run, the best organised - this man is saying to you `don't worry what France or Britain or America will say - we will do it`. In fact, during 1933 the German government made more money available for the army than the German army could actually use. So, yes, there is a strong link back to Versailles, but it is in the context of the Great Depression.

Appeasement - of course people like Neville Chamberlain are labeled as guilty, but much of this perspective was written by Winston Churchill. The Anglo-German Naval Treaty of 1935 appeared to give the Germans the `green light` that Britain would negotiate and back away from conflict but in doing so, Simon said, we need to remember that people like Chamberlain, Halifax etc., had been involved in WW1. It is not to say they were right, but Simon said to ask yourself the question, if you had been the Mayor of - say - Birmingham - watching battalions go off to war, seeing the endless casualty lists - might you have wanted to avoid another conflict? I think most people would have sincerely wanted to do everything possible to avoid conflict.

The Anschluss - why did Britain do nothing about the German link up with Austria? It was in the Versailles Treaty that this was forbidden...but this was the exact opposite of what the rest of the Treaty said - people of common nationality and language should go together - and we (the

Allies) had said that two German countries must not join together - a mistake as in fact the Austrians had a much more moderate view than some of the north German states and may have brought balance to a unified state with that different approach. It is an interesting point that had Germany had Austria from 1919 it may have been a different Germany.

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Simon had previously mentioned that Hitler invaded Austria on a Saturday - similarly he had re-occupied the Rhineland on a Saturday - he tended to make these moves on weekends as he knew that the British ruling classes tended to be at the country houses at the weekends! Not entirely true...but not entirely wrong either. Munich is the most debatable one, you have one million Czechs on the border, fully armed, with all their defences - and you decide not to fight. Was Britain a lot better prepared by a year later....arguably it was, considerably better prepared - but without 1.2 million determined Czech allies. Most historians now agree that any subsequent agreements and promises to Poland were meaningless as we could not get to Poland - to get to Poland to assist them you have to cross Germany. The whole French defensive system was based around the Maginot line, solely to deter Germany from invading France.

Simon mentioned the recent film `Darkest hour` - how marvelously `political correct` it was - that scene with Churchill on the tube train - a complete fabrication - it never happened - but the sad thing for the historian is, while Churchill clearly did a lot of good - the film showed Chamberlain in a poor light - but it was actually he who started re-armament, and arguably bought Britain time. One of the things the Americans did after the war was they forgave people their debts - they forgave some debts to the Germans by adjusting their levels of reparations - but one country they never forgave any of was...Britain, and in 1931 when Britain came off the gold standard, at that time paying 6% interest - way above what everyone else was paying. This was promptly reduced to 2% by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Who was that Chancellor of the Exchequer? Neville Chamberlain, who promptly put that saving on interest payments towards re-armament.

And with that, perhaps controversial comment, Simon concluded his presentation. As always we carried on with a brisk Q & A session - good to see Craig Jackson amongst us again, with his well-prepared questions, the answers to his questions and those of other members were answered in a comprehensive manner by Dr Peple. The Q & A ended, our Branch Chair Tony Bolton proposed a vote of thanks to Dr Peple, to which the attendees responded generously.

## **The Douglas Haig Fellowship – Annual General Meeting**

**1st February 2019, Royal United Services Institute, Whitehall**



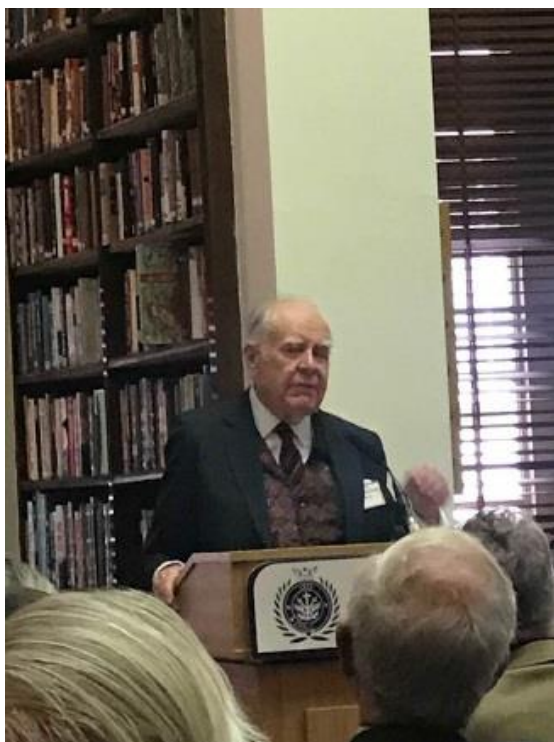


**PATRON: The Rt. Hon. Lord Astor of Hever, PC, DL**  
**13**

Being a member, Branch Vice Chair and WFA Trustee Mark Macartney joined other Members and guests of The Douglas Haig Fellowship in attending The Annual General Meeting of the Douglas Haig Fellowship. The AGM was chaired by Lord Astor and was followed by a sandwich lunch after which John Hussey' gave an excellent talk on Douglas Haig's active promotion of care and support for the returning veterans of the Great War. John stood in at short notice replacing the scheduled speaker John Bourne who was unwell. This talk (to a packed room) was absolutely fantastic, and the discussions afterwards (yes note this was not a normal question and answer session) as each question turned into a full blown discussion.

Afterwards Lord Astor laid a wreath at the base of his grandfather's statue on Whitehall

Picture under shows John Hussey delivering his talk on Haig in 1919 to Douglas Haig Fellowship at RUSI. On the right, Lord Aster and his sister laying the Wreath





# MARCH

# 30

## Birmingham



## 8th WFA President's Conference

**Saturday 30th March 2019**

**Doors 09.00. Start 09.45 until 16.30**

Tally Ho! Sports and Social Club, Birmingham B5 7RN

### REFLECTIONS ON THE GREAT WAR

- **Far from Contemptible: Memoirs of the BEF's 1914 Campaigns**  
Dr Spencer Jones
- **The BEF's Commanders on the Cusp of Victory, September 1918**  
Prof John Bourne
- **France's Pyrrhic Victory: Military lessons and Political-Strategic legacies of 1918/1919** Prof Martin Alexander
- **Not quite more of the same: British Officers in two world wars** Prof Gary Sheffield
- Panel chaired by Peter Simkins

Cost £35 - booking via website or by contacting WFA Office

**Telephone: 020 7118 1914**

**[www.westernfrontassociation.com](http://www.westernfrontassociation.com)**

# APRIL

# 27

## RAF Cosford



## 2019 Spring Conference and AGM

**Saturday 27th April 2019**

**at RAF Cosford, Shifnal, Shropshire TF11 8UP**

Transport - free parking: Half hourly trains from Birmingham (Shrewsbury Line) to Cosford Station (10 minute walk to venue)

### Programme for the day

- 9.30am Doors: tea & coffee
- 10.15am Welcome by the President
- 10.20am **Escapes and Escapades? British Prisoners of War during the First World War** Dr Oliver Wilkinson
- 11.20am **Shell Shock after the First World War** Dr. Fiona Reid
- 12.20pm buffet lunch (need to pre-book)
- 13.20pm AGM
- 14.40pm tea/coffee
- 15.05pm AGM

### FREE TO MEMBERS

Contact Steve Oram to book place + book optional £15 buffet lunch.

**[secretary@westernfrontassociation.com](mailto:secretary@westernfrontassociation.com)**



## The Munitions Crisis - part 21

Under the Munitions of War (Amendment) Act of January 1916, the Minister had taken powers to control not only the wages but the conditions of employment of women workers on munitions, and also of semi-skilled and unskilled men and boys taking the work of skilled men in controlled companies. The Welfare Section of the Ministry, however, while holding these powers in reserve, adopted the deliberate policy of educating rather than compelling the firms engaged on munition work to put in hand arrangements for the welfare of their employees. The Director of the Welfare Section, Seebohm Rowntree held that this was the only way of ensuring that the improved conditions so created would continue permanently after the war. In the first instance the Welfare Section naturally devoted its principal effort to securing proper conditions for the women workers. At the outset they were often worse off than the existing male staffs, for no special accommodation or provision had in most cases been furnished for them and they had no persons of their own sex in authority to whom to appeal. In April 1916, the Minister ruled that women supervisors should be appointed in all factories where women or young persons were employed, and that they should be approved by the Welfare Section. Their introduction into the national factories served as a precedent for their introduction into controlled establishments. In the same month a start was made by the Section with the development of welfare supervision for boys.

The welfare arrangements which were initiated included the provision of staffs and proper accommodation. The staffs comprised supervisors and assistant supervisors of welfare and, in the larger establishments, matrons, nurses, lady doctors, cloak-room attendants etc.

The provision of welfare accommodation included such matters as washing facilities, sanitary conveniences, cloak-rooms, canteens, seats in work-rooms, supplies of overalls and caps, and recreation facilities. It was necessary to persuade some employers that one broken basin and a jug of cold water was insufficient washing provision for a staff of 300 workers; that workers engaged in hot, heavy and exhausting work should be able to have convenient access to clean drinking water and not to be reduced to running the risk of typhoid by drinking water intended only for the manufacturing processes; that the efficiency of workers would be increased if they were not required to work all day in the clothes drenched by rain on their way to work in the morning, and if they could take their meals in the comfort of a mess room, or better still - get cheap and wholesome food in a canteen instead of gobbling scrappy food beside their machines.

The policy of persuasion was, however, justified by its results. The demand for welfare supervisors grew to such an extent that special training courses were arranged by the Department - a function later taken on by the London School of Economics and by most provincial universities. Over 1000 welfare supervisors of varying grades were working in munition factories at the date of the Armistice in November 1918. Allowing for the fact that their appointment had been made compulsory in explosives factories and practically compulsory in national factories, probably some 700 had been appointed voluntarily by heads of companies or boards of management.

The welfare policy of the department ensured the standard of physical comfort for nearly 350000 workers in the national factories and government establishments, much above the minimum required under the Factory and Workshop Acts as in force at that time, and it stimulated a similar provision of canteens, rest rooms, ambulance rooms and other material comforts, to a greater or less degree in a large proportion of the other controlled establishments, in which at least 400000 women munition workers were employed. This increased comfort was extended in some measure at least among a million and a quarter men and a quarter of a million boys similarly employed by controlled companies and national factories.

The department built, or promoted the building of, nearly 12000 flats and houses for munition workers. It provided hostels for a further 23500 workers and secured accommodation in a large number of other cases, together with lodgings and billets in private houses for munition workers. It provided directly for canteens and mess-rooms in the great majority of the 150 national and government factories, while the Central Liquor Control Board approved on behalf of the Department the canteens of some 740 controlled establishments. Its work in promoting intelligent care for the health and comfort of employees, the convenience of their hours, the hygienic conditions of their work, is perhaps less susceptible to statistical statement, but was as least as important in the permanent impression it made on the country's national industrial conditions.

As early as 1917-1918 the Factory Inspectors Annual Report bore witness to the effect of the welfare movement stimulated by the Ministry of Munitions in permeating the standards of non-munition trades such as ...

*“ Cotton and woolen and worsted textiles, in laundries, in potteries, in biscuit factories...where conditions, with honourable exceptions, have long been stationary, but here too....the new movement has begun to take effect...In these and many other developments moving towards social welfare in non-munition factories in 1917, there is really less sudden growth than it is apt to be considered. Enlightened workers have been asking for these things and enlightened manufacturers have been demonstrating for many years that these improving conditions are both rightly demanded and practicable. Now common sense awakened sees that the pace must be greatly quickened....It is not only in controlled and national factories that material advance has been made. The whole spirit of management has quickly changed in many factories and industries where no new welfare order runs, and where State control of profits has not entered”*

Legislative provision for the extension of the welfare movement was in full operation when the work of the department ceased. The principles established by the Ministry of Munitions through persuasion were being gradually followed up by the Home Office with definitive legislation. As early as August 1916, the Police, Factories, etc., Miscellaneous Provision Acts gave definite powers of enforcing welfare provision. The Trade Boards Act of 1918 authorised trade boards to `make representations` to Government departments with regards to working conditions in their trade, while in the organised industries and increasing number of Joint Industrial Councils were beginning to consider questions of hours, conditions and training. The prospect of legislative provision for a 48 hour week for all factory workers had appeared on the horizon.

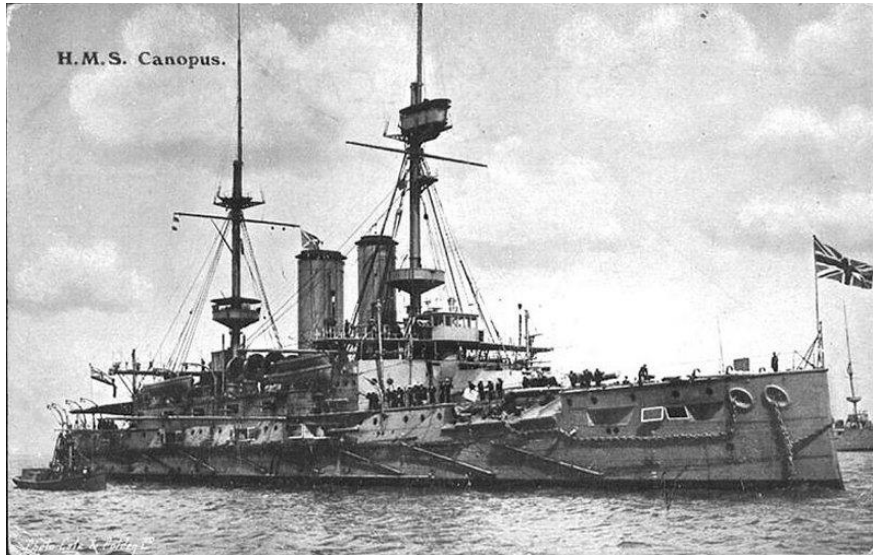
In the light of these and other subsequent developments, there seems to have been a certain note of prophecy made by David Lloyd George, the Minister of Munitions in February 1916 when he said,

*“It is a strange irony, but no small compensation, that the making of weapons of destruction should afford the occasion to humanise industry. Yet such is the case. Old prejudices have vanished, new ideas are abroad; employers and workers, the public and the /State, are favourable to new methods. This opportunity must not be allowed to slip. It may well be that, when the tumult of war is but a distant echo, and the making of munitions a nightmare of the past, the effort now being made to soften asperities, to secure the welfare of the workers, and to build a bridge of sympathy and understanding between employer and employed, will have left behind results of permanent and enduring values to the workers, the nation, and mankind at large.”*

**Concluded**



## THE CANOPUS CLASS



There was six vessels in the class, and all were built in the late 1890s, being designed for service on the China station. The ships were created by the genius of William White, the Director of Naval Construction, and the class comprised Canopus, the lead ship, Glory, Albion, Ocean, Goliath, and Vengeance. The class was preceded by the successful Majestic class and succeeded by the Formidable class, and for those who aren't sure, they were built for and served in the British Royal Navy.

The design work on what would evolve into the Canopus class began in March 1895, when William Henry White, the Director of Naval Construction, created the design for the Fuji class battleships, to be built in Britain for the Imperial Japanese navy. The Fuji's were based on the British Royal Sovereign class and marked an increase in Japanese naval power in East Asia, and White argued the case that a more powerful class of battleships (the term battleship was officially adopted by the Royal Navy in the re-classification of 1892), would be needed on the China Station to counter Japan's new ships. An irony given the effect the Anglo-Japanese treaty would have on the class's deployments. He also proposed that any new design should be capable of using the Suez Canal in order to reduce the transit time between Europe and Asia. The Board agreed with his argument and on 13th May met once more with White to brief him on their requirements for the new class of ships. Two days later, White relayed the Admiralty's outline for the ships to his staff, along with instructions to prepare a suitable design as quickly as possible. The new ships were to have a freeboard equal to that of the battleship HMS Centurion, the same main battery as the preceding Majestic class battleships, a secondary battery of ten 6-inch (150 mm) guns, the speed and fuel capacity as the second-class battleship Renown, and an armoured belt that was 6 inches thick.

On the 23rd May White and his staff presented a preliminary design sketch to the Admiralty. This design carried the specified battery of four 12-inch (300 mm) guns and ten 6-inch guns on a displacement of 13,250 tonnes (13,040 long tons; 14,610 short tons). Their speed was 18 knots provided from 12,500 indicated horsepower (9,300 kW). Further work to refine the design by his staff continued, and three versions were created: "A", "B", and "C". "A" had a reduced displacement of 13,000 tonnes (13,000 long tons; 14,000 short tons), but was to keep the same armament and speed. "B" was similar to the original design, but had an extra two 6-inch guns, and "C" was slightly smaller and similar to the lines of "A", but its secondary battery consisted of eight 6-inch guns and eight 4-inch (100 mm) guns. The three variants were submitted to the

Admiralty on the 9th October, and the Board instructed White to draft a new design that was to combine the armour layout of "A" and "B" with the secondary battery of "B".

Design work was to continue for almost a year before the final version was approved on 2nd September 1896. By this stage time, the Admiralty had decided to introduce the new water tube boilers following successfully trials on the torpedo gunboat, Sharpshooter. The format of the armour was further revised, with the final version dropping the thinner side armour above the belt, along with the aft strake ("a continuous line of planking or plates from the stem to the stern of a ship or boat" Wikipedia) of armour plus the main and secondary guns also had their armour protection reduced. The purpose in these reductions were to increase the thickness of the forward strake, the main deck and to allow the placement of four of the secondary guns into armoured casemates. Though the thickness of the armour was reduced compared to the preceding Majestic class, the use of the new Krupp steel instead of the Harvey steel gave only a modest decrease in the vessels protection.

Six vessels, to be rated as first class battleships, ("the typical first class battleship of the pre-dreadnought era displaced 15,000 to 17,000 tons, had a speed of 16 knots, and an armament of four 12-inch (305 mm) guns in two turrets fore and aft with a mixed-caliber secondary battery amidships around the superstructure" Wikipedia), were authorized to be built to the new classes design in the 1896 and 1897 navy estimates. Even though the armour was not as weak as it appeared within the design, the Royal Navy was not pleased with the reduction in their defensive power. White's department regarded them as second class battleships, (smaller, slower and with less endurance than the first class battleship) and they were to be re-classified as improved Renowns in the 1896 navy estimates. But despite the Navies dislike of the class, they did match the Fujis that they had been conceived to counter, and they were the maximum offensive and defensive capabilities possible within the displacement and draught restrictions that has been imposed by the Admiralty. They were to prove in service to be more than capable of performing the task for which they had been built, to serve on the China Station.

The ships of the Canopus class were 421 ft. 6 in (128.47 m) in overall length, and had a beam of 74 ft. (23 m). Their draft was of 26 ft. 2 in (7.98 m) normally and dropped up to 30 feet (9.1 m) when fully loaded. Their displacement was 13,150 tonnes (12,940 long tons) normally and up to 14,300 tonnes (14,100 long tons) when at full load. The ships carried with two masts, each with one fighting top a piece, and fitted with several of the light guns as well as one searchlight. Four other searchlights were mounted on the bridges.

The crew was comprised of 682 officers and enlisted men on completion, but this number would vary throughout their careers. In 1904, Goliath's crew had increased to 737 and Albion had a crew of 752, which did however included an admiral's staff. But whilst serving as a gunnery training ship in 1912, Vengeances crew was just 400, while Albion's was reduced to 371 officers and sailors while serving as a guard ship in 1916. Canopus crew is given in one source as Company Officers 42, Seamen 328, Marines 94, Engine room establishment 169, other non-executive ratings 61, making a total of 694 men. Vengeance's crew in the same source is listed as Officers 23, Seamen & Boys 149, Marines 54, Engine-room establishment 82, other non-executive ratings 45 making a total of 353.

Each ship carried a number of small boats, which including two steam pinnacles and one sail pinnacles, one steam launch, three cutters, one galley, one whaler, three gigs, two dinghies, and one raft. The source mentioned above gives a fuller break down of Canopus's boats as; One 56 ft. Picket boat, Two 40 ft. Steam Pinnacles, One 42 ft. Launch, One 36 ft. Sail Pinnacles, Two 32 ft. Cutters, One 27 ft. Whaler, One 32 ft. Galley, one 16 ft. Dinghy. Vengeance's small boat is listed as one 56ft Picket boat, two 40ft steam pinnacles, one 42ft launch, one 36ft pinnacles, two 34ft cutter, one 30ft cutter, three 27ft whalers, one 30ft galley, one 16ft skiff, one 13 1/2ft dinghy and one balsa raft.

The Canopus class were powered by a pair of 3-cylinder triple-expansion engines that turned a pair of inward turning screw propellers, with twenty Belleville boilers providing the steam. A Royal Navy Report explains inward and outward rotating screws as follows;

Propellers that turned inwards towards the top improved the flow of water. Speed and range was improved.

However the ship's maneuverability at slow speeds and performance in reverse was greatly diminished." Chris Knupp The Great War at Sea 1914-1919 (facebook) and The Navy General Board.

"There are probably some engineering reasons for doing so. However from a ship handling perspective the direction of rotation has a big bearing on what happens when you change the direction of rotation i.e. engage reverse. A propeller turning anti-clockwise when the vessel is operating in reverse will initially pull you to starboard until you obtain enough steerage way (speed up) to compensate. A propeller turning clockwise will do the opposite". Sean Norris, The Great War at Sea 1914-1919 (Facebook)

They were to be the first British battleships equipping with water-tube boilers, which generated more power at less expense in weight compared with the fire-tube boilers used in previous ships. The new boilers led to the adoption of the two fore and aft funnels, over the side-by-side funnel arrangement that had been used in many previous British battleships. The Canopus class ships were to prove to be good steamers, with a high speed for battleships of the period at 18 knots from 13,500 indicated horsepower (10,100 kW), which was two knots faster than the Majestic's. The increase in speed was to come mainly from the water-tube boilers, which produced an extra 1,500 ihp (1,100 kW) compared to the older fire-tube boilers of the Majestic's. The inward-turning screws also provided an increase in speed, since they could be operated at higher revolutions than the outward-turning screws used in earlier ships. The water tanks held 150 tons for the boilers, and another set of tanks held 131 tons of drinking water.

Each ship had a bunker capacity of 900 tons (890 long tons; 990 short tons) of coal under normal conditions, but additional spaces could be used to double the capacity to 1,800 tons (1,800 long tons; 2,000 short tons) in time of war. The ships boilers consumed 52 tons (51 long tons; 57 short tons) of coal when steaming at 8 knots for 24 hours and this increased to 336 tons (331 long tons; 370 short tons) when at full speed for 24 hours. The Canopus vessels were capable of 5,320 nautical sea miles (8,560 km) at an economical cruising speed of 10 knots under a full load of coal. While steaming at 16.5 knots the range would drop to 2,590 n.s.ml.

Despite the water-tube boilers increasing their performance, they too were plagued with problems throughout their lives. HMS Ocean's boiler condenser tubes leaked badly until a refit in 1902 to 1903 finally resolved the problem. The Vengeance was to suffer the same issues throughout her service life, which reduced the efficiency of her engines. The inward turning screws were also to cause problems, as they made steering difficult at low speed or when steaming in reverse, the arrangement coming to be unpopular with crews as a result. But despite the issues, the Royal Navy retained inward-turning screws in all their future pre-dreadnought battleships, before returning to outward-turning propellers for Dreadnought in 1906.

The Canopus class had four 12-inch (305 mm) 35-calibre guns mounted into twin gun turrets fore and aft. The guns were mounted in circular barbettes that allowed for all around loading, but at a fixed elevation. Canopus carried her guns in "BIII" mountings, the same used that was used in the last two Majestic class ships, but the following four vessels used the newer "BIV" mounts, and Vengeance used newer "BV" mountings. The "BIII" mounts featured a deck that split the shell and propellant hoists in order to prevent a flash fire from any explosion in the turret reaching down to the magazines, which could produce a catastrophic explosion. The "BIV" mount

excluded this deck in order to allow for faster ammunition handling, but the designers realized the increased risk this entailed, and had restored the deck with the "BV" mounts. To improve the shell handling speed, a new turret had been developed by Vickers for Vengeance that allowed for reloading the guns at all elevations, which eliminated the need to return to the fixed loading elevation, improving her rate of fire significantly.

The ships mounted twelve 6 inch 40 calibre guns mounted in casemates, in addition to ten 12-pounder guns and six 3-pounder guns. Eight of the 6-inch guns were mounted on the main deck, which left them too low to give them a good field of fire, but the other four guns, mount a deck higher, we're not to suffer with the same problem. As was standard for battleships of the period, they were also equipped with four 18-inch (460 mm) torpedo tubes submerged into the hull, two on each broadside near the forward and aft barbette. A fifth tube had originally been planned for the ship's stern, above the water, but it was cancelled during their construction. This was probably because the above water tubes could not be fully protected, and should a torpedo exploded while it was still in the tube, it would cause serious damage to the ship. During the war, in common with other older ships, the eight 6-inch guns casemated on the first deck proved of little use in some sea states. It was decided to remove the eight casemate guns, plate their ports over and move 4 of them to the upper deck. Four of the twelve 12-pdr guns were also lost due to this change.

In an effort to save weight, Canopus would carry less armour than the preceding Majestic's. The armoured belt was 6 inches (152 mm) compared to 9 inch (229 mm), but the adoption of Krupp armour from the Harvey armour used in the Majestic's, meant that the loss in protection was not as large as it might have been. Krupp armour gave 30% greater protective value at a given weight than its Harvey equivalent. Though the armour was thinner, it was more comprehensive. The Canopus class was the first British capital ship to return to a full length armoured belt since the Dreadnought, launched in 1875. In order to save weight, the belt was reduced to 2 inches (51 mm) at either end of the ship. As with the belt, the other armour used to protect the ships could also be thinner, the bulkheads on either end of the belt being 6 to 10 inch (152 to 254 mm) thick.

The class had two armoured decks, 1 and 2 inch (25 and 51 mm) thick, both of which were manufactured from Harvey steel. This was to be the first time a second armour deck was installed into a British warship. At the time of their design, rumours claimed that the French intended to equip their newest battleships with howitzers, which could fire shells at high angles. This would allow them to hit British ships with plunging fire, avoiding the ships' heavy belt armour. But the French did not actually place howitzers on any of their new ships, despite that, the adoption of two armour decks was continued in British practice until the Nelson class battleships of the 1920s. (It's often or easily forgotten that in the main the British built their battleships prior to around 1900 to face a French threat, which may be obvious as you read this, but we so easily think RN v Germany and forget the French naval race).

The main battery turrets were 8 inch (200 mm) thick with 2 inch thick roofs, situated on top of 10 to 12 inch (254 to 305 mm) barbettes. The barbettes narrowed to 6 inch behind the belt. Not all areas within the ships received the Krupp steel. The casemate battery was protected with 6 inch of Harvey steel on the fronts, and 2 inch on the sides and the rears. Their forward conning towers sides were also constructed of Harvey steel that was 12 inch thick, while the aft conning towers had only 3 inch (76 mm) sides.

The thinner armour configuration used for the class was to come under criticism while they were being built, particularly in the press. White publicly defended his design, pointing out that recent experience between Chinese and Japanese warships at the Battle of the Yalu River demonstrated that armour proved to be more effective in protecting ships than any tests would



indicate, and the advances in armour technology allowed for the reduction in service of saving weight for better weapons.

The class's internal communication to the 6-in casements and 12-pdr guns were to be by several means, in the main based on 2 inch voice-pipes with call bells. The forward-most upper deck guns were to receive verbal orders directly from the conning tower, which they would then relay by a voice-pipe under the boat deck to the after casement. The second forward-most main deck guns would receive word by voice-pipe from the conning tower, which they would then relay by voice-pipe to the other casements on the same side. The forward 12-pdrs would receive orders by a single voice-pipe from the fore bridge, while those aft would receive similar coverage from the after bridge. Communications between the smaller guns and their magazines were to be by shouting through supply scuttles, only. Finally, none of the class was to never receive a Dreyer table.

The six Canopus's pennant numbers were as follows;

H.M.S Canopus (1897) Pendant Number: N.29 (1914) N.17 (Jan 1918). Nick name "Cannabis", humorous malapropism

H.M.S. Vengeance (1899) Pendant Number:N.57 (1914) N.1A (Jan 1918) Nick name, "The Lords Own", derived from the phrase "The Lord's own vengeance", based on the sentiment of Romans 12:19

H.M.S. Ocean (1898) Pendant Number:N.56 (1914)

H.M.S. Goliath (1898) Pendant Number:N.54 (1914)



Goliath-14

H.M.S. Glory (1899) Pendant Number:P.08 (1914), P.92 (Jan 1918)

H.M.S. Albion (1898) Pendant Number:N.48 (1914)N.00 (Jan 1918). Nickname "The Grey Ghost" (of The Borneo Coast).





Major Raymond Collishaw  
 Sopwith Camel, No. D 3417  
 No. 203 Squadron, Royal Flying Corps (RFC)  
 62 Aerial Victories  
 1918

XX

**Lest we forget: Binyon’s Ode of Remembrance**



A plaque on a Cornwall clifftop marks where Laurence Binyon wrote the world’s most commemorative poem.

On an autumn day in 1914 Laurence Binyon sat on a cliff in North Cornwall, somewhere between Pentire Point and the Rump. It was less than seven weeks after the outbreak of war, but British casualties were mounting. Long lists of the dead and wounded were appearing in British newspapers. With the British Expeditionary Force in retreat from Mons, promises of a speedy end to war were fading fast.

Against this backdrop Binyon, then Assistant Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum, sat to compose a poem that Rudyard Kipling would one day praise as “the most beautiful expression of sorrow in the English language”.

‘For the Fallen’, as Binyon called his poem, was published in *The Times* on 21 September 1914. “The poem grew in stature as the war progressed”, Binyon’s biographer John Hatcher observed, “accommodating itself to the scale of the nation’s grief”.

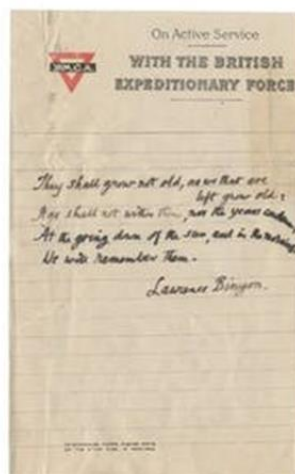


Nearly a century on, Binyon’s poem endures as a dignified and solemn expression of loss. The fourth stanza - lifted to prominence as “The Ode of Remembrance” - is engraved on cenotaphs, war memorials and headstones in war cemeteries throughout the English-speaking world. Recited at Remembrance services in Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, the poem serves as a secular prayer:

***They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn;  
At the going down of the sun, and in the morning,  
We will remember them.***

These lines, situated at the heart of the poem, lay out an argument for consolation in which the dead are immortalised in the memory of the living.

Binyon died on 10 March 1943, and his ashes were scattered on the grounds of St Mary’s Church in Aldworth. His name is commemorated on a stone plaque in Poet’s Corner at Westminster Abbey, alongside 15 fellow poets of the Great War. Wilfred Owen - who died in action at age 25, exactly one week before the signing of the Armistice - provided the inscription: “My subject is War, and the pity of War. The Poetry is in the pity.”



From The `Sheffield Independent` ` March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1915

“CONSTANTINOPLE – AND AFTER.

“THE FORCING OF THE DARDANELLES.

“By Sir Edwin Pears.

In an article published on 2nd March 1915, in the Sheffield Independent newspaper, Sir Edwin Pears, who had lived for 40 years in Istanbul, considered the obstacles facing the Anglo-French fleet in its path to the Ottoman capital. He seemed confident that they would succeed, however.



“Two objects are sought the Allies in attempting to force the passage of the Dardanelles. The first is to have a passage open through to the Black Sea, and to enable the Russians export the enormous quantity grain now lying in South Russia ready for shipment to Western Europe. The second is of not less importance. It is to divide the Turkish army in Asia from the one in Europe. A Rome correspondent reports that the Turkish Government refuses to transfer itself to Adrianople, as the Germans desire, instead to Broussa. Mr. Trevelyan suggests in your columns that the aim of the Germans is to direct an Austro-Hungarian army, with a spear-head of German troops, to the south of Hungary and into Bulgaria, which, if no opposition were made by King Ferdinand, would join with the Turkish troops in Adrianople. It is clearly of importance to counter any such move, and this would be effectually done if the Allied fleets cleared the Straits, meaning, of course, the Bosphorus as well as the Dardanelles, and thus had command of the entire passage from the Aegean to the Black Sea.

“The Russians in Armenia.

“It was suggested by some of your contemporaries last week that probably Russia would land troops at Medea or at some place a little further south. Such a course is not probable. Even at the beginning of December there were 120,000 Turkish troops at Adrianople. There were probably at least 50,000 at the Chatalja lines, against which the Bulgarian army was powerless. A Russian army landing between these two Turkish armies would have the sea as its base. That sea maintains its evil reputation during the winter and spring months. The difficulty of landing an army, even during fine weather, at any point south of Medea would be very serious. Moreover, though the Goeben is a lame duck and possibly cannot steam more than ten knots an hour, she would of use as a floating fortress, and could make the landing of a



Russian Army or its supplies in the place suggested a task of great risk. I hesitate to believe that such a plan has even been thought of by the Russians. Bearing in mind, however, that the German plan may be to induce or force Bulgaria to allow the German Army to pass through to Adrianople the statement that the Turkish Government refuses to transfer itself to Adrianople is not only probable, but serious. Enver Pasha has returned to Constantinople, probably on the suggestion of his German colleagues that it is of more importance to strengthen the Army in Adrianople than to obstruct the progress of the Russians in Armenia. I doubt whether even his great influence will induce the Turkish Ministers to abandon their design of retiring to Broussa.

“Your readers must not be in too great a hurry to see the Allied Fleets making their way triumphantly across the Marmora to Constantinople. Their greatest difficulty will be to force the Dardanelles. The guns of some of our ships will carry 15 miles, while it is doubtful whether the Turkish guns will carry more than ten. The Dardanelles from their entrance at Kum Kale to Gallipoli, are about 27 miles long, and vary from less than a mile off Nagara Point and at the Narrows opposite Chanak, which is the most important town on the Dardanelles, to average width of between two and three miles. The strongest fortifications are at the point of Nagara, just mentioned, where the Straits turn almost at right angles, land at Cape Hellas, on the European shore. The forts at the entrance to the Dardanelles from the Aegean are at Kum Kale, on the Asiatic, and at Cape Hellas, on the European shore. Both these forts have been destroyed, the first in the last days of November, and the second by Admiral Carden last Friday week.

“The method of procedure of the fleets is the following: With long distance guns our ships silenced the forts, the Turks being unable to effect any injury to the Allied ships. Before advancing into the Straits, boats' crews were sent under cover of the guns to see that the forts were destroyed beyond speedy repair. But the whole Straits, from the forts in question up to Nagara Point, are strewn with mines, and they must be cleaned away. Dredging operations immediately commence after the forts are silenced. The mines being swept up, the ships advance over the cleared space in order to attack other forts. Up to this morning we have news that they have advanced four miles – not ten, as stated in unofficial telegrams on Saturday. [27th February 1915] Ten miles would have brought them actually opposite the guns which have been in position during the last four years, about two miles to the south of Chanak, and, indeed, well within the range of both Chanak and the Nagara guns, and those on the European shore at Kiliji Bahir, and into the very thickest portion of the minefield.

“The Principal Task.

“It may be surmised that at the distance of four miles from the entrance they are now pounding away at the Asiatic fort below Chanak, and are already within range of the guns at the Narrows. Their principal task will be the clearing away of probably at least three hundred mines. Most of these are contact mines, and were brought down almost ostentatiously from Constanza in September and October. An English merchant vessel, the Craigforth, was for two or three days anchored off Gallipoli, and I have no doubt that her captain, a man of keen intelligence, counted the number mines which he saw on board two or three ships waiting be taken off and deposited in the water. The Turks, indeed, noticed that he saw too much, for as he could not get through the Dardanelles his ship was ordered back to Constantinople, and, remaining there till the outbreak of war with Turkey, is still in the Bosphorus. The pressing task for the moment is to clear away the mines. We shall probably learn to-day whether they have been at the same time attacking their starboard and port sides. Hard fighting will probably be in the Narrows and off Nagara Point. This point, to travellers coming either up or down the Channel, appears like long neck of land stretching more halfway across the Channel. The current during at least 300 days in the year runs strongly through the Dardanelles to the Aegean at a rate of rarely than five miles an hour, and at Nagara Point is deflected almost at right angles. The water under the south-western side of such points is thus quite calm. It is here that at any time during the last three years the Fleet has been anchored. It was here too, that the gallant feat was performed by a submarine in the early days of December, when this vessel having worked her way through the minefield submerged herself during eight hours and then sunk Mehsudieh, which, until he left, was Admiral Limpus's flagship. Nagara is the danger point, because a series of forts at Chanak and opposite can concentrate their guns on any ship which attempts to pass.

“Landing Parties.

“Before such attempt is made we may safely anticipate that there will be a great destruction of forts and mines. But we may anticipate also that the same cautious measure will be repeated of destroying the forts, sending landing parties ashore to see that they cannot be rendered available, and clearing away the mines. The ships will be the centre of a circle, where they are virtually unassailable. Opposite Nagara Point the peninsula which forms the northern point of the Straits is at its narrowest, and is not more than four miles across. But a range of hills extends virtually along the whole length of the Straits on the European side, varying from 250 to 600 feet in height. It is possible that the Germans may have placed guns upon these heights to attack the ships. It is also possible that the fleets have arranged that a landing party may make the attempt from the Gulf of Xeros to take the guns in the rear, but so far no indication of the kind has been given. In like manner the southern or Asiatic shore it would not be difficult to march an army from Neochorion, called in Turkish Yenisheir, opposite Tenedos. So far as one can judge the ships count upon making the passage without the aid of landing parties. When the fleets have passed Nagara Point they have accomplished the most difficult part of their task. But the Straits for a distance of twenty miles, to opposite Gallipoli, have been carefully mined, and the mines will have to be swept up. When they have reached Gallipoli they will still be exposed to the fire of forts in the neighbourhood of Bulair. where there are a series of works for land defence erected by English engineers during the Crimean War. The forty miles from Gallipoli to Marmora Island will be clear running, except for guns which have been placed on the latter island, and others on the ancient point of Heraclia. But with wide sea room there is not likely to be any serious impediment to their progress. At the mouth of the Bosphorus batteries have been constructed at Moda Point, near the ancient city of Chalcedon.

“To Constantinople.

“A somewhat wild telegram appeared week, which stated that the Turks were making Heligoland of Prinkipo. What they have done is the following: On its highest peak, St. George, 590ft. high, they have erected a battery during the last two months, which, however, is not likely to alarm the fleets. When these small batteries are silenced and destroyed, the fleets can enter the Bosphorus, and the one place, so far as my information goes, which has been fortified on the European shore, is the German Embassy, which itself forms one of the most conspicuous objects on the heights of Pera.

“Whether the Russians will join in the operations at the Black Sea end of the Bosphorus is probably known to our fleet, but not generally. The guns there until two months ago had nothing which would deter the Russian fleet. It is well known that on both sides of the Black Sea and there are many German troops. The German conscripts who were called up for Turkey and brought to Turkey from Egypt and the Far East by the Canal were collected there in anticipation that an attempt would be made by the Russians to land either at Kilios on the European or Riva on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus. It may be, therefore, that the task will have to be accomplished by the English and French fleets alone; but once they get through safely to Constantinople, the forcing of the Bosphorus will be comparatively easy.

“In conclusion, I have only to say while the military effect of such a success would be very great, its moral effect would be still greater, because the influence of the peace party, which is still striving against the Germans and Enver Pasha, would become dominant and seek to make with the Allies.” [1]

[1] 'Sheffield Independent,' 2nd March 1915.